

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, February 27, 2019, Pioneer, CA

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) achieved unanimous support for the Scottiago Project (comprised of two separate decisions) on the El Dorado National Forest (NF) and conveyed it to the full ACCG for consensus-seeking consideration at the March 20, 2019 general meeting.
- Scottiago Project materials can be accessed on the ACCG website at the following link:
<http://acconsensus.org/projects-2/member-projects/>

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Forest Service will send the following materials by March 15, 2019 to Tania Carlone and Regine Miller for distribution to ACCG and posting on website: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Categorical Exemption (CE) FAQ document➤ Scottiago Project wildlife and fire/fuels specialists reports➤ Unsigned Scottiago decision memos➤ Request for letters of support➤ Draft letters of support	Rick Hopson Tania Carlone Regine Miller
Meeting participants agreed to follow-up with WG member groups that were not present at meeting to inquire about any remaining concerns about Scottiago: 1) Foothill Conservancy (Ben); 2) Sierra Pacific Industries (Rick/Marc); 3) Cal am (Rich)	Ben Solvesky Rick Hopson Marc Young Rich Farrington
WG participants agreed that there would be a Scottiago field trip to observe how operators administer DxP in the field and agreed to invite SOFAR stakeholders to participate.	Rick Hopson Tania Carlone Regine Miller
WG participants agreed that it would be helpful for the Forest Service to make an informational presentation to the ACCG general meeting about DxP.	Tania Carlone
Delete last bullet on page 3 of the Proposed Action (PA).	Darby Boe Jesse Plummer
Invite national CFLR coordinator to make an ACCG presentation to help inform the ACCG's discussion about the protocols associated with the use of CFLR funds.	Rick Hopson

Summary

Roundtable Updates and Information Sharing

Amador Resource Conservation District (RCD) Grant Submission: Gwen Starrett informed the Planning WG that the Amador RCD submitted a proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for \$400,000 for the Three Meadows restoration project.

Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC): Heidi Beswick announced that CSERC is hosting a wildlife photo contest. Details are on CSERC's website. The deadline for entries is March 31, 2019.

Tree Mortality: Beverly Bulaon informed the WG that aerial detection surveys and counts for tree mortality can be found on the regional website.

Calaveras Ranger District: Elaina Osimowitz informed WG members that the Black Springs Campground Environmental Assessment (EA) may be on a future ACCG agenda. The project includes building pit toilets, roadside hazard tree removal, and possible fencing repair around the meadow.

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El Dorado National Forest Update: Rick Hopson, Amador District Ranger, reported that El Dorado NF is undertaking a reorganization/consolidation of ranger districts (RD). The intention is to reduce RDs from 4 to 3; anticipating that there will be a north, middle, and south ranger district. There will be new organizational charts, once the consolidation occurs. It will be several months before the change becomes public. Rick is the team lead on the reorganization and anticipates there will be a public process associated with the consolidation. It appears that the Amador RD will pick up a part of the SOFAR project area.

Amador Ranger District Announcement: Rick announced that Robin Wall will be on special assignment for a 120-day detail in the recreation program. There is no immediate solution to who will serve as CFLR coordinator for the Amador RD. Agreements for payments and other administrative functions will continue as-is. However, coordination for the Planning WG and Robin's staff time to attend meetings will be affected, including the Planning and Monitoring WGs, where she was an active member.

Power Fire Reforestation Update: Marc Young announced that tree planting will start weather permitting on 300-400 acres.

Power Fire Information Request: Rich Farrington requested transparency for the expenditure of the \$45 million settlement funds. Rick explained that the information request will take some time but the Forest Service is in the process of assembling information to share with the ACCG.

Amador Ranger District, El Dorado National Forest, Scottiago Project

Project Overview & Intent: Rick gave a brief overview of the Proposed Action (PA), summarized project development activities, and identified the objectives for the WG discussion including:

- Revisit project elements/clarify changes to PA
- Ensure Forest Service direction and ACCG triple bottom line are achieved
- Identify and work through any remaining concerns
- Specify next steps to achieve ACCG consensus on the Scottiago project

Rick noted that the Amador RD received comment letters from the ACCG, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), Sierra Forest Legacy (SFL), CSERC, and Foothill Conservancy. Since receiving those comments, the RD has worked to resolve some issues in the PA. The project has two primary focus areas that have been broken into two decisions: 1) forest health (using insect and disease Categorical Exemption (CE) (Section 603); and, 2) fire and fuels/increase landscape resiliency to wildfire (Section 605). The project area is entirely within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) adjacent to private parcels within highly productive California Spotted Owl (CSO) habitat. The Forest Service views this project as important for reducing potential loss of CSO habitat. As such, there are treatments within CSO Protected Activity Centers (PACs) to promote fire resiliency.

Changes to PA: Marc Young presented the three main changes in the PA based on the Forest Service's response to public comments, field reconnaissance activities, and to stay within the permissible 3,000-acre CE limit. The categories of changes include:

- Commercial harvest units were dropped or changed to fuel treatments
- Expanded roadside treatment areas
- Clarified some treatments in the CSO PACS

Discussion:

- Ben Solvesky (SFL) suggested that a key to the project's successful approach was the use of two difference CEs that were used appropriately and in a way that met the intent of the legislation. Ben clarified that SFL does not support the use of CE 6 to cover prescribed burn. Liz Gregg expressed that CSERC was comfortable with the Project's approach to CEs and appreciated that a third CE was not used.

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- WG members clarified that collaboration is key because there is no objection process under CEs. However, CEs allow scoping to occur all the way up to the decision being signed.
- WG participants asked if CFLR funds would be used for Scottiago. Rick responded that CFLR funds have been used thus far and if there are more CFLR funds available, it is likely that they would be used for the project. This prompted the question about whether CFLR funds can be used without an ACCG consensus decision. Rick suggested that it might be valuable to invite the national CFLR coordinator to make an ACCG presentation to help inform the ACCG's discussion about protocols associated with the use of CFLR funds.
- The Forest Service clarified that trees have yet to be marked for removal but that DXP would be utilized. WG participants agreed that it would be beneficial to have a field trip to help clarify how DXP is administered in the field. Additionally, WG participants agreed that it would be helpful for the Forest Service to make an informational presentation at the ACCG general meeting about DXP.
- Ben voiced support for the project with two caveats: 1) he requested more detailed discussions about Stand Density Index (SDI)—what is the appropriate SDI max and how do GTR-220 and SDI max fit together? 2) he requested to be involved in project implementation, specifically related to marking stands.
- Gwen Starrett underscored that the Forest Service did a lot to bring ACCG members into project development early in the process by convening field trips, fulfilling information requests, addressing many of the issues raised, as well as staying away from the most controversial issues, such as herbicides while minimizing impacts to the CSO PACS and utilizing more prescribed fire.

Future Meetings

The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on March 27, 2019 from 9-noon at the Calaveras Ranger District in Hathaway Pines.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Heidi Beswick	CSERC
Liz Gregg	CSERC
Regine Miller	CHIPS; ACCG Administrator
Gwen Starrett	Local Resident
Ben Solvesky	Sierra Forest Legacy
Rich Farrington	UMRWA/AWA
Rick Hopson	USFS
Marc Young	USFS
Darby Boe	USFS
Alaina Osimowitz	USFS
Beverly Bulaon	USFS
Chuck Loffland	USFS
Jesse Plummer	USFS
Tania Carlone	Facilitator, Consensus Building Institute